No. 4

GRADED POETRY READERS

BLAKE-ALEXANDER

MAYNARD, MERRILL, & COMPANY.

GRADED POETRY READERS

FOURTH YEAR

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INTRODUCTION

POETRY is the chosen language of childhood and youth. The baby repeats words again and again for the mere joy of their sound: the melody of nursery rhymes gives a delight which is quite independent of the meaning of the words. Not until youth approaches maturity is there an equal pleasure in the rounded periods of elegant prose. It is in childhood therefore that the young mind should be stored with poems whose rhythm will be a present delight and whose beautiful thoughts will not lose their charm in later years.

The selections for the lowest grades are addressed primarily to the feeling for verbal beauty, the recognition of which in the mind of the child is fundamental to the plan of this work. The editors have felt that the inclusion of critical notes in these little books intended for elementary school children would be not only superfluous, but, in the degree in which critical comment drew the child's attention from the text, subversive of the desired result. Nor are there any notes on methods. The best way to teach children to love a poem is to read it inspiringly to them. The French say: "The ear is the pathway to the heart." A poem should be so read that it will sing itself in the hearts of the listening children.

In the brief biographies appended to the later books the human element has been brought out. An effort has been made to call attention to the education of the poet and his equipment for his life work rather than to the literary qualities of his style.

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FOURTH YEAR — FIRST HALF

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

ENGLAND, 1564–1616

Ariel's Song

Come unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands, —
Curtsied when you have and kiss'd;
(The wild waves whist) —
Foot it featly here and there; 5
And, sweet sprites, the burden bear.
Hark, hark!
Bough wough,
The watchdog's bark,
Bough wough, 10
Hark, hark, I hear
The strain of strutting chanticleer,
Cry, cock-a-doodle-doo.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

SCOTLAND, 1850–1894

From a Railway Carriage

Faster than fairies, faster than witches,
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches; 15

And charging along like troops in a battle,
All through the meadows the horses and cattle;
All of the sights of the hill and the plain
Fly as thick as driving rain;
5 And ever again, in the wink of an eye,
Painted stations whistle by.

Here is a child who clambers and scrambles, —
All by himself and gathering brambles;
Here is a tramp who stands and gazes;
10 And there is the green for stringing the daisies!
Here is a cart run away in the road
Lumping along with man and load;
And here is a mill and there is a river:
Each a glimpse and gone forever!

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

ENGLAND, 1830–1894

There's Nothing Like the Rose

15 The lily has an air,
And the snowdrop a grace,
And the sweet pea a-way,
And the heart's-ease a face, —
Yet there's nothing like the rose
20 When she blows.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

AMERICA, 1807–1882

Rain in Summer

How beautiful is the rain!
After the dust and the heat,
In the broad and fiery street,
In the narrow lane,
How beautiful is the rain! 5

How it clatters along the roofs,
Like the tramp of hoofs!
How it gushes and struggles out
From the throat of the overflowing spout!
Across the windowpane 10
It pours and pours;
And swift and wide,
With a muddy tide,
Like a river down the gutter roars
The rain, the welcome rain! 15

The sick man from his chamber looks
At the twisted brooks.
He can feel the cool
Breath of each little pool;
His fevered brain 20

Grows calm again,
And he breathes a blessing on the rain.

From the neighboring school
Come the boys,
5 With more than their wonted noise
And commotion;
And down the wet streets
Sail their mimic fleets,
Till the treacherous pool
10 Engulfs them in its whirling
And turbulent ocean.

In the country on every side,
Where far and wide,
Like a leopard's tawny and spotted hide,
15 Stretches the plain,
To the dry grass and the drier grain
How welcome is the rain!

In the furrowed land
The toilsome and patient oxen stand;
20 Lifting the yoke-encumbered head,
With their dilated nostrils spread,
They silently inhale
The clover-scented gale,
And the vapors that arise

From the well-watered and smoking soil.
For this rest in the furrow after toil
Their large and lustrous eyes
Seem to thank the Lord,
More than man's spoken word. 5

Near at hand
From under the sheltering trees,
The farmer sees
His pastures and his fields of grain,
As they bend their tops 10
To the numberless beating drops
Of the incessant rain.
He counts it as no sin
That he sees therein
Only his own thrift and gain. 15

CLARA SMITH

Jack in the Pulpit

1. Jack in the pulpit
   Preaches to-day,
   Under the green trees
   Just over the way.
   Squirrel and song sparrow, 20
   High on their perch,

Hear the sweet lily bells
  Ringing to church.
Come hear what his reverence
  Rises to say
5 In his low, painted pulpit
  This calm Sabbath day.

2. Meek-faced anemones,
  Drooping and sad;
Great yellow violets,
10 Smiling out glad;
Buttercups' faces,
  Beaming and bright;
Clovers with bonnets,
  Some red and some white;
15 Daisies, their white fingers
  Half clasped in prayer;
Dandelions, proud of
  The gold of their hair;
Innocents, children
20 Guileless and frail,
Meek little faces
  Upturned and pale;
Wildwood geraniums,
  All in their best,
25 Languidly leaning,

In purple gauze dressed: —
All are assembled
This sweet Sabbath day
To hear what the priest
In his pulpit will say. 5

3. So much for the preacher:
The sermon comes next, —
Shall we tell how he preached it
And where was his text?
Alas! like too many 10
Grown-up folks who play
At worship in churches
Man-builded to-day, —
We heard not the preacher
Expound or discuss; 15
But we looked at the people,
And they looked at us.
We all saw their dresses —
Their colors and shapes;
The trim of their bonnets, 20
The cut of their capes;
We heard the wind organ,
The bee and the bird,
But of Jack in the pulpit
We heard not a word! 25

JAMES HOGG

SCOTLAND, 1770–1835

A Boy's Song

Where the pools are bright and deep,
Where the gray trout lies asleep,
Up the river and o'er the lea,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the blackbird sings the latest,
Where the hawthorn blooms the sweetest,
Where the nestlings chirp and flee,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the mowers mow the cleanest,
Where the hay lies thick and greenest;
There to trace the homeward bee,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the hazel bank is steepest,
Where the shadow lies the deepest,
Where the clustering nuts fall free,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Why the boys should drive away
Little maidens from their play,
Or love to banter and fight so well,
That's the thing I never could tell.

But this I know, I love to play
Through the meadow, along the hay;
Up the water and o'er the lea,
That's the way for Billy and me.

THOMAS HOOD

ENGLAND, 1798–1845

I Remember, I Remember

I remember, I remember 5
  The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
  Came peeping in at morn;
He never came a wink too soon,
  Nor brought too long a day; 10
But now I often wish the night
  Had borne my breath away!

I remember, I remember
  The roses, red and white,
The violets, and the lily cups, 15
  Those flowers made of light!
The lilacs where the robin built,
  And where my brother set
The laburnum on his birthday, —
  The tree is living yet! 20

I remember, I remember
  Where I was used to swing,
And thought the air must rush as fresh
  To swallows on the wing;
5 My spirit flew in feathers then,
  That is so heavy now,
And summer pools could hardly cool
  The fever on my brow!

I remember, I remember
10 The fir trees dark and high;
I used to think their slender tops
  Were close against the sky:
It was a childish ignorance,
  But now 'tis little joy
15 To know I'm farther off from heaven
  Than when I was a boy.

FELICIA DOROTHEA HEMANS

ENGLAND, 1793–1835

Casabianca

The boy stood on the burning deck,
  Whence all but him had fled;
The flame that lit the battle's wreck,
20 Shone round him o'er the dead;

Yet beautiful and bright he stood,
  As born to rule the storm;
A creature of heroic blood,
  A proud though childlike form.

The flames rolled on — he would not go 5
  Without his father's word;
That father, faint in death below,
  His voice no longer heard.
He called aloud: "Say, Father, say
  If yet my task is done!" 10
He knew not that the chieftain lay
  Unconscious of his son.

"Speak, Father!" once again he cried,
  "If I may yet be gone!"
And but the booming shots replied, 15
  And fast the flames rolled on.
Upon his brow he felt their breath,
  And in his waving hair;
And looked from that lone post of death,
  In still, yet brave despair; 20

And shouted but once more aloud,
  "My Father! must I stay?"
While o'er him fast, through sail and shroud,
  The wreathing fires made way.

They wrapt the ship in splendor wild,
  They caught the flag on high,
And streamed above the gallant child,
  Like banners in the sky.

5 There came a burst of thunder sound —
  The boy — O! where was he?
— Ask of the winds that far around
  With fragments strewed the sea,
With mast, and helm, and pennon fair
10 That well had borne their part —
But the noblest thing that perished there
  Was that young faithful heart!

HANNAH GOULD

ENGLAND, 1789–1865

Jack Frost

The Frost looked forth on a still, clear night,
And whispered, "Now, I shall be out of sight;
15 So, through the valley, and over the height,
  In silence I'll take my way.
I will not go on like that blustering train,
The wind, and the snow, the hail and the rain,
That make such a bustle and noise in vain;
20 But I'll be as busy as they!"

So he flew to the mountain, and powdered its crest,
He lit on the trees, and their boughs he dressed
With diamonds and pearls; and over the breast
Of the quivering lake, he spread
A coat of mail, that it need not fear 5
The glittering point of many a spear
Which he flung on its margin, far and near,
Where a rock could rear its head.

He went to the window of those who slept,
And over each pane like a fairy crept: 10
Wherever he breathed, wherever he stepped,
By the morning light were seen
Most beautiful things! — there were flowers and trees,
There were bevies of birds, and swarms of bees;
There were cities, and temples, and towers; and these 15
All pictured in silvery sheen!

But he did one thing that was hardly fair;
He peeped in the cupboard, and finding there
That all had forgotten for him to prepare,
"Now, just to set them a-thinking, 20
I'll bite this basket of fruit," said he,
"This costly pitcher I'll burst in three!
And the glass of water they've left for me,
Shall 'tchick' to tell them I'm drinking."

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

AMERICA, 1807–1882

The Children's Hour

Between the dark and the daylight,
  When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations
  That is known as the Children's Hour.

5 I hear in the chamber above me
  The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
  And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,
10 Descending the broad hall stair,
Grave Alice and laughing Allegra,
  And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence;
  Yet I know by their merry eyes,
15 They are plotting and planning together
  To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway,
  A sudden raid from the hall!

By three doors left unguarded
  They enter my castle wall!

They climb up into my turret,
  O'er the arms and back of my chair;
If I try to escape, they surround me; 5
  They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,
  Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
  In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine. 10

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,
  Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old mustache as I am
  Is not a match for you all?

I have you fast in my fortress, 15
  And will not let you depart,
But put you down into the dungeon
  In the round tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you forever,
  Yes, forever and a day, 20
Till the wall shall crumble to ruin,
  And molder in dust away.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

AMERICA, 1853–

The Brook Song[1]

Little brook! Little brook!
You have such a happy look —
Such a very merry manner, as you swerve and curve and crook —
And your ripples, one by one,
5 Reach each other's hands and run
Like laughing little children in the sun!

Little brook, sing to me!
Sing about a bumblebee
That tumbled from a lily-bell and grumbled mumblingly,
10 Because he wet the film
Of his wings, and had to swim,
While the water-bugs raced round and laughed at him.

Little brook — sing a song
Of a leaf that sailed along
15 Down the gold-hearted center of your current swift and strong,

[1] From "Rhymes of Childhood," copyright 1900. Used by special permission of the publishers, the Bobbs-Merrill Company.

And a dragon fly that lit
On the tilting rim of it,
And rode away and wasn't scared a bit.

And sing — how oft in glee
Came a truant boy like me, 5
Who loved to lean and listen to your lilting melody,
Till the gurgle and refrain
Of your music in his brain
Wrought a happiness as keen to him as pain.

Little brook — laugh and leap! 10
Do not let the dreamer weep;
Sing him all the songs of summer till he sink in softest sleep;
And then sing soft and low
Through his dreams of long ago —
Sing back to him the rest he used to know! 15

THOMAS WESTWOOD

ENGLAND, 1814–1888

Little Bell

Piped the blackbird on the beechwood spray,
"Pretty maid, slow wandering this way,
What's your name?" quoth he —

"What's your name? Oh, stop and straight unfold,
Pretty maid with showery curls of gold!"
"Little Bell," said she.

Little Bell sat down beneath the rocks—
5 Tossed aside her gleaming golden locks.
"Bonny bird," quoth she,
"Sing me your best song before I go."
"Here's the very finest song I know,
Little Bell," said he.

10 And the blackbird piped; you never heard
Half so gay a song from any bird—
Full of quips and wiles,
Now so round and rich, now soft and slow,
All for love of that sweet face below,
15 Dimpled o'er with smiles.

And the while the bonny bird did pour
His full heart out freely o'er and o'er,
'Neath the morning skies,
In the little childish heart below
20 All the sweetness seemed to grow and grow,
And shine forth in happy overflow
From the blue, bright eyes.

Down the dell she tripped, and through the glade
Peeped the squirrel from the hazel shade,
And, from out the tree
Swung, and leaped, and frolicked, void of fear —
While bold blackbird piped, that all might hear. 5
"Little Bell!" piped he.

Little Bell sat down amid the fern.
"Squirrel, squirrel, to your task return!
Bring me nuts," quoth she.
Up, away the frisky squirrel hies — 10
Golden wood lights glancing in his eyes —
And adown the tree,

Great ripe nuts, kissed brown by July sun,
In the little lap dropped one by one.
Hark, how blackbird pipes to see the fun! 15
"Happy Bell!" pipes he.

Little Bell looked up and down the glade.
"Squirrel, squirrel, if you're not afraid,
Come and share with me!"
Down came squirrel, eager for his fare, 20
Down came bonny blackbird, I declare!
Little Bell gave each his honest share;
Ah, the merry three!

And the while these frolic playmates twain
Piped and frisked from bough to bough again,
'Neath the morning skies,
In the little childish heart below
5 All the sweetness seemed to grow and grow,
And shine out in happy overflow,
From her blue, bright eyes.

By her snow-white cot at close of day
Knelt sweet Bell, with folded palms, to pray.
10 Very calm and clear
Rose the praying voice to where, unseen,
In blue heaven, an angel shape serene
Paused a while to hear.

"What good child is this," the angel said,
15 "That, with happy heart, beside her bed
Prays so lovingly?"
Low and soft, oh! very low and soft,
Crooned the blackbird in the orchard croft.
"Bell, *dear* Bell!" crooned he.

20 "Whom God's creatures love," the angel fair
Murmured, "God doth bless with angels' care;
Child, thy bed shall be
Folded safe from harm. Love, deep and kind,
Shall watch around, and leave good gifts behind,
25 Little Bell, for thee."

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

AMERICA, 1794–1878

Robert of Lincoln

Merrily swinging on brier and weed,
  Near to the nest of his little dame,
Over the mountain side or mead,
  Robert of Lincoln is telling his name,
    Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link, 5
    Spink, spank, spink,
Snug and safe in this nest of ours,
Hidden among the summer flowers.
    Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln is gayly dressed, 10
  Wearing a bright, black wedding coat;
White are his shoulders and white his crest
  Hear him call in his merry note,
    Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
    Spink, spank, spink, 15
Look what a nice new coat is mine;
Sure there was never a bird so fine.
    Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln's Quaker wife,
  Pretty and quaint, with plain brown wings, 20

Passing at home a patient life,
  Broods in the grass while her husband sings,
    Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
    Spink, spank, spink,
5 Brood, kind creature, you need not fear
Thieves and robbers while I am here.
    Chee, chee, chee.

Modest and shy as a nun is she;
  One weak chirp is her only note;
10 Braggart, and prince of braggarts is he,
  Pouring boasts from his little throat,
    Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
    Spink, spank, spink,
Never was I afraid of man,
15 Catch me, cowardly knaves, if you can.
    Chee, chee, chee.

Six white eggs on a bed of hay,
  Flecked with purple, a pretty sight;
There as the mother sits all day,
20 Robert is singing with all his might,
    Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
    Spink, spank, spink,
Nice good wife that never goes out,
Keeping house while I frolic about.
25 Chee, chee, chee.

Soon as the little ones chip the shell,
  Six wide mouths are open for food;
Robert of Lincoln bestirs him well,
  Gathering seeds for the hungry brood,
    Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link, 5
    Spink, spank, spink,
This new life is likely to be
Hard for a gay young fellow like me.
    Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln at length is made 10
  Sober with work, and silent with care;
Off is his holiday garment laid,
  Half forgotten that merry air,
    Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
    Spink, spank, spink, 15
Nobody knows, but my mate and I,
Where our nest and our nestlings lie.
    Chee, chee, chee.

Summer wanes, the children are grown,
  Fun and frolic no more he knows, 20
Robert of Lincoln's a humdrum drone,
  Off he flies and we sing as he goes,
    Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
    Spink, spank, spink,

When you can pipe that merry old strain,
Robert of Lincoln, come back again.
Chee, chee, chee.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

AMERICA, 1853–

A Song[1]

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear;
5 There is ever a something sings alway:
There's the song of the lark when the skies are clear,
And the song of the thrush when the skies are gray.
The sunshine showers across the grain,
And the bluebird trills in the orchard tree;
10 And in and out when the eaves drip rain,
The swallows are twittering ceaselessly.

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,
In the midnight black, or the midday blue;
The robin pipes when the sun is here,
15 And the cricket chirrups the whole night through.

[1] From "Rhymes of Childhood," copyright 1900. Used by special permission of the publishers, the Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis.

The buds may grow and the fruit may grow,
And the autumn leaves drop crisp and sear;
But whether the sun, or the rain, or the snow,
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear.

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear, 5
Be the skies above or dark or fair,
There is ever a song that our hearts may hear —
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear —
There is ever a song somewhere.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

ENGLAND, 1770–1850

The Pet Lamb

The dew was falling fast, the stars began to blink; 10
I heard a voice; it said, "Drink, pretty creature, drink!"
And looking o'er the hedge, before me I espied
A snow-white mountain lamb, with a maiden at its side.

Nor sheep nor kine were near; the lamb was all alone,
And by a slender cord was tethered to a stone; 15

With one knee on the grass did the little maiden kneel,
While to that mountain lamb she gave its evening meal.

The lamb, while from her hand he thus his supper took,
Seemed to feast with head and ears; and his tail with pleasure shook:
5 "Drink, pretty creature, drink!" she said in such a tone
That I almost received her heart into my own.

'Twas little Barbara Lewthwaite, a child of beauty rare!
I watched them with delight, they were a lovely pair.
Now with her empty can the maiden turned away;
10 But ere ten yards were gone, her footsteps did she stay.

Right towards the lamb she looked; and from that shady place
I unobserved could see the workings of her face;

If nature to her tongue could measured numbers bring,
Thus, thought I, to her lamb that little maid might sing:

"What ails thee, young one? what? Why pull so at thy cord?
Is it not well with thee? well both for bed and board?
Thy plot of grass is soft, and green as grass can be; 5
Rest, little young one, rest; what is't that aileth thee?

"What is it thou wouldst seek? What is wanting to thy heart?
Thy limbs are they not strong? and beautiful thou art!
This grass is tender grass; these flowers they have no peers;
And that green corn all day is rustling in thy ears. 10

"If the sun be shining hot, do but stretch thy woolen chain;
This beech is standing by, its covert thou canst gain;

For rain and mountain storms! — the like thou need'st not fear,
The rain and storm are things that scarcely can come here.

"Rest, little young one, rest; thou hast forgot the day
When my father found thee first in places far away;
5 Many flocks were on the hills, but thou wert owned by none,
And thy mother from thy side forevermore was gone.

"He took thee in his arms, and in pity brought thee home:
A blesséd day for thee! — then whither wouldst thou roam?
A faithful nurse thou hast; the dam that did thee yean
10 Upon the mountain tops, no kinder could have been.

"Thou know'st that twice a day I have brought thee in this can
Fresh water from the brook, as clear as ever ran;

And twice in the day, when the ground is wet
with dew,
I bring thee draughts of milk, warm milk it is
and new.

"Thy limbs will shortly be twice as stout as
they are now,
Then I'll yoke thee to my cart like a pony in
the plow.
My playmate thou shalt be; and when the wind 5
is cold
Our hearth shall be thy bed, our house shall be
thy fold.

"It will not, will not rest! — Poor creature, can
it be
That 'tis thy mother's heart which is working
so in thee?
Things that I know not of belike to thee are
dear,
And dreams of things which thou canst neither 10
see nor hear.

"Alas, the mountain tops that look so green
and fair!
I've heard of fearful winds and darkness that
come there;

The little brooks that seem all pastime and all play,
When they are angry, roar like lions for their prey.

"Here thou need'st not dread the raven in the sky;
Night and day thou art safe, — our cottage is hard by.
5 Why bleat so after me? Why pull so at thy chain?
Sleep — and at break of day I will come to thee again!"

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

AMERICA, 1807–1882

The Wreck of the "Hesperus"

It was the schooner *Hesperus*,
That sailed the wintry sea;
And the skipper had taken his little daughter
10 To bear him company.

Blue were her eyes as the fairy flax,
Her cheeks like the dawn of day,
And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds,
That ope in the month of May.

The skipper he stood beside the helm,
  His pipe was in his mouth,
And he watched how the veering flaw did blow
  The smoke now west, now south.

Then up and spake an old sailor, 5
  Had sailed the Spanish Main.
"I pray thee, put into yonder port,
  For I fear a hurricane.

"Last night the moon had a golden ring,
  And to-night no moon we see!" 10
The skipper he blew a whiff from his pipe,
  And a scornful laugh laughed he.

Colder and colder blew the wind,
  A gale from the northeast;
The snow fell hissing in the brine, 15
  And the billows frothed like yeast.

Down came the storm and smote amain
  The vessel in its strength;
She shuddered and paused, like a frightened steed,
  Then leaped her cable's length. 20

"Come hither! come hither! my little daughter,
  And do not tremble so;
For I can weather the roughest gale,
  That ever wind did blow."

He wrapped her warm in his seaman's coat,
Against the stinging blast;
He cut a rope from a broken spar
And bound her to the mast.

5 "O father! I hear the church bells ring,
O say, what may it be?"
"'Tis a fog-bell on a rock-bound coast!"
And he steered for the open sea.

"O father! I hear the sound of guns,
10 O say, what may it be?"
"Some ship in distress that cannot live
In such an angry sea!"

"O father! I see a gleaming light,
O say, what may it be?"
15 But the father answered never a word;
A frozen corpse was he.

Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark,
With his face turned to the skies,
The lantern gleamed through the gleaming snow
20 On his fixed and glassy eyes.

Then the maiden clasped her hands and prayed
That savéd she might be;
And she thought of Christ who stilled the wave
On the Lake of Galilee.

And fast through the midnight dark and drear,
  Through the whistling sleet and snow,
Like a sheeted ghost, the vessel swept
  Toward the reef of Norman's Woe.

And ever the fitful gusts between 5
  A sound came from the land;
It was the sound of the trampling surf,
  On the rocks and the hard sea sand.

The breakers were right beneath her bows,
  She drifted a dreary wreck, 10
And a whooping billow swept the crew
  Like icicles from her deck.

She struck where the white and fleecy waves
  Looked soft as carded wool,
But the cruel rocks they gored her side 15
  Like the horns of an angry bull.

Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice,
  With the masts went by the board;
Like a vessel of glass, she stove and sank.
  Ho, ho! the breakers roared! 20

At daybreak, on the bleak sea beach,
  A fisherman stood aghast,
To see the form of a maiden fair
  Lashed close to a drifting mast.

The salt sea was frozen on her hair,
  The salt tears in her eyes;
And he saw her hair, like the brown seaweed,
  On the billows fall and rise.

5 Such was the wreck of the *Hesperus*,
  In the midnight and the snow!
Christ save us all from a death like this,
  On the reef of Norman's Woe!

NAHUM TATE

ENGLAND, 1652–1715

While Shepherds watched their Flocks by Night

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
10 All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
  And glory shone around.

"Fear not," said he, for mighty dread
  Had seized their troubled mind;
15 "Glad tidings of great joy I bring
  To you and all mankind.

"To you, in David's town, this day
  Is born, of David's line,
The Savior, who is Christ the Lord,
  And this shall be the sign:

"The heavenly babe you there shall find 5
  To human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in swaddling bands,
  And in a manger laid."

Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith
  Appeared a shining throng 10
Of angels, praising God, who thus
  Addressed their joyful song:

"All glory be to God on high,
  And to the earth be peace;
Good will henceforth from Heaven to men 15
  Begin and never cease."

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

ENGLAND, 1809–1861

A Child's Thought of God

They say that God lives very high!
  But if you look above the pines
You cannot see our God. And why?

And if you dig down in the mines
  You never see Him in the gold,
Though from Him all that's glory shines.

God is so good, He wears a fold
5 Of heaven and earth across His face—
Like secrets kept, for love, untold.

But still I feel that His embrace
  Slides down by thrills, through all things made,
Through sight and sound of every place:

10 As if my tender mother laid
  On my shut lids, her kisses' pressure,
Half waking me at night; and said
  "Who kissed you through the dark, dear guesser?"

WILLIAM BLAKE

ENGLAND, 1757–1827

Night

The sun descending in the west,
15 The evening star does shine;
The birds are silent in their nest,
  And I must seek for mine.

The moon, like a flower
In heaven's high bower,
With silent delight,
Sits and smiles on the night.

Farewell, green fields and happy grove, 5
Where flocks have ta'en delight.
Where lambs have nibbled, silent move
The feet of angels bright;
Unseen, they pour blessing,
And joy without ceasing, 10
On each bud and blossom,
And each sleeping bosom.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

ENGLAND, 1796–1849

From "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"

He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.
He prayeth best who loveth best 15
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

FOURTH YEAR — SECOND HALF

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

ENGLAND, 1564–1616

Hark!

Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phœbus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies:
5 And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes;
With everything that pretty bin,
My lady sweet, arise:
Arise, arise!

EMILY DICKINSON

AMERICA, 1830–1886

Out of the Morning

10 Will there really be a morning?
Is there such a thing as day?
Could I see it from the mountains
If I were as tall as they?

Has it feet like water lilies?
  Has it feathers like a bird?
Is it brought from famous countries
  Of which I have never heard?

Oh, some scholar! Oh, some sailor! 5
  Oh, some wise man from the skies!
Please to tell a little pilgrim
  Where the place called morning lies!

JOSEPH RODMAN DRAKE

AMERICA, 1795–1820

Song from "The Culprit Fay"

Ouphe and Goblin! Imp and Sprite!
  Elf of eve! and starry Fay! 10
Ye that love the moon's soft light,
  Hither, hither wend your way;
Twine ye in a jocund ring,
  Sing and trip it merrily,
Hand to hand, and wing to wing, 15
  Round the wild witch-hazel tree.

The beetle guards our holy ground,
  He flies about the haunted place,
And if mortal there be found,
  He hums in his ears and flaps his face; 20

The leaf-harp sounds our roundelay,
  The owlet's eyes our lanterns be;
Thus we sing, and dance, and play,
  Round the wild witch-hazel tree.

But, hark! from tower on tree-top high,
  The sentry-elf his call has made:
A streak is in the eastern sky,
  Shapes of moonlight! Flit and fade!
The hilltops gleam in morning's spring,
The skylark shakes his dappled wing,
The day-glimpse glimmers on the lawn,
The cock has crowed, and the Fays are gone.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

AMERICA, 1819–1891

The Fountain

Into the sunshine,
Full of the light,
Leaping and flashing
From morn till night.

Into the moonlight,
Whiter than snow,
Waving so flower-like
When the winds blow.

Into the starlight
Rushing in spray,
Happy at midnight,
Happy by day.

Ever in motion, 5
Blithesome and cheery.
Still climbing heavenward,
Never aweary.

Glad of all weathers,
Still seeming best, 10
Upward or downward,
Motion thy rest.

Full of a nature
Nothing can tame,
Changed every moment, 15
Ever the same.

Ceaseless aspiring,
Ceaseless content,
Darkness or Sunshine,
Thy element. 20

Glorious fountain,
Let my heart be
Fresh, changeful, constant,
Upward, like thee!

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

ENGLAND, 1564–1616

March, from "A Winter's Tale"

Daffodils
That come before the swallows dare, and take
The winds of March with beauty.

WILLIAM HOWITT

ENGLAND, 1792–1879

The Wind in a Frolic

The wind one morning sprung up from sleep,
5 Saying, "Now for a frolic! Now for a leap!
Now for a madcap galloping chase!
I'll make a commotion in every place!"

So it swept with a bustle right through a great town,
Creaking the signs and scattering down
10 Shutters, and whisking with merciless squalls,
Old women's bonnets and gingerbread stalls.
There never was heard a much lustier shout,
As the apples and oranges tumbled about.

Then away to the fields it went blustering and humming,
And the cattle all wondered whatever was coming.
It pulled by their tails the grave, matronly cows,
And tossed the colts' manes all about their brows,
Till, offended at such a familiar salute, 5
They all turned their backs and stood silently mute.

So on it went, capering and playing its pranks;
Whistling with reeds on the broad river banks;
Puffing the birds, as they sat on the spray,
Or the traveler grave on the king's highway. 10
It was not too nice to hustle the bags
Of the beggar, and flutter his dirty rags.
'Twas so bold that it feared not to play its joke
With the doctor's wig, and the gentleman's cloak.

Through the forest it roared, and cried gayly, 15 "Now
You sturdy old oaks, I'll make you bow!"
And it made them bow without more ado,
Or it cracked their great branches through and through.

Then it rushed like a monster o'er cottage and farm,
Striking their inmates with sudden alarm;
And they ran out like bees in a midsummer swarm.
There were dames with their kerchiefs tied over their caps,
5 To see if their poultry were free from mishaps;
The turkeys they gobbled, the geese screamed aloud,
And the hens crept to roost in a terrified crowd;
There was raising of ladders, and logs laying on,
Where the thatch from the roof threatened soon to be gone.

10 But the wind had passed on, and had met in a lane
With a schoolboy, who panted and struggled in vain;
For it tossed him, and whirled him, then passed, and he stood
With his hat in a pool, and his shoe in the mud.

Then away went the wind in its holiday glee,
15 And now it was far on the billowy sea;
And the lordly ships felt its powerful blow,
And the little boats darted to and fro.

But, lo! it was night, and it sunk to rest
On the sea birds' rock in the gleaming west,
Laughing to think, in its frolicsome fun,
How little of mischief it really had done.

HELEN GRAY CONE

AMERICA, 1859–

A Fairy Tale

There stands by the wood path shaded 5
  A meek little beggar maid;
Close under her mantle faded
  She is hidden like one afraid.

Yet if you but lifted lightly
  That mantle of russet brown, 10
She would spring up slender and sightly,
  In a smoke-blue silken gown.

For she is a princess, fated
  Disguised in the wood to dwell,
And all her life has awaited 15
  The touch that should break the spell;

And the Oak, that has cast around her
His root, like a wrinkled arm,
Is the wild old wizard that bound her
Fast with his cruel charm.

5 Is the princess worth your knowing?
Then haste, for the spring is brief,
And find the Hepatica growing,
Hid under last year's leaf!

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

AMERICA, 1794–1878

The Yellow Violet

When beechen buds begin to swell,
10 And woods the bluebird's warble know
The yellow violet's modest bell
Peeps from the last year's leaves below.

Ere russet fields their green resume,
Sweet flower, I love, in forest bare,
15 To meet thee, when thy faint perfume
Alone is in the virgin air.

Of all her train, the hands of Spring
First plant thee in the watery mold,

And I have seen thee blossoming
  Beside the snow bank's edges cold.

Thy parent sun, who bade thee view
  Pale skies, and chilling moisture sip,
Has bathed thee in his own bright hue, 5
  And streaked with jet thy glowing lip.

Yet slight thy form, and low thy seat,
  And earthward bent thy gentle eye,
Unapt the passing view to meet,
  When loftier flowers are flaunting nigh. 10

Oft, in the sunless April day,
  Thy early smile has stayed my walk;
But midst the gorgeous blooms of May,
  I passed thee on thy humble stalk.

So they who climb to wealth forget 15
  The friends in darker fortunes tried.
I copied them — but I regret
  That I should ape the ways of pride.

And when again the genial hour
  Awakes the painted tribes of light, 20
I'll not o'erlook the modest flower
  That made the woods of April bright.

JAMES HOGG

SCOTLAND, 1770–1835

The Skylark

Bird of the wilderness,
Blithesome and cumberless,
Sweet be thy matin o'er moorland and lea!
Emblem of happiness,
5 Blest is thy dwelling-place,—
Oh, to abide in the desert with thee!

Wild is thy lay and loud,
Far in the downy cloud;
Love gives it energy, love gave it birth.
10 Where on thy dewy wing,
Where art thou journeying.
Thy lay is in heaven, thy love is on earth.

O'er fen and fountain sheen,
O'er moor and mountain green,
15 O'er the red streamer that heralds the day,
Over the cloudlet dim,
Over the rainbow's rim,
Musical cherub, soar, singing, away!

Then, when the gloaming comes,
Low in the heather blooms
Sweet will thy welcome and bed of love be!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling place,— 5
Oh, to abide in the desert with thee!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

ENGLAND, 1770–1850

To a Butterfly

I've watched you now a full half hour,
Self-poised upon that yellow flower;
And, little butterfly, indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed. 10
How motionless! — not frozen seas
More motionless! and then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again! 15

This plot of orchard ground is ours;
My trees they are, my sister's flowers;
Here rest your wings when they are weary;
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!

Come often to us, fear no wrong;
Sit near us, on the bough!
We'll talk of sunshine and of song;
And summer days when we were young;
5 Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.

MARY HOWITT

ENGLAND, 1804–1888

Birds in Summer

How pleasant the life of a bird must be,
Flitting about in each leafy tree;
In the leafy trees, so broad and tall,
10 Like a green and beautiful palace hall,
With its airy chambers light and boon,
That open to sun and stars and moon;
That open to the bright blue sky,
And the frolicsome winds as they wander by!

15 They have left their nests on the forest bough;
Those homes of delight they need not now;
And the young and the old they wander out,
And traverse their green world round about;

And hark! at the top of this leafy hall,
How one to the other in love they call!
"Come up! come up!" they seem to say,
"Where the topmost twigs in the breezes sway."

"Come up! come up! for the world is fair 5
Where the merry leaves dance in the summer air."
And the birds below give back the cry,
"We come, we come, to the branches high."
How pleasant the lives of the birds must be,
Living in love in a leafy tree! 10
And away through the air what joy to go,
And to look on the green, bright earth below!

How pleasant the life of a bird must be,
Skimming about on the breezy sea,
Cresting the billows like silvery foam, 15
Then wheeling away to its cliff-built home!
What joy it must be to sail, upborne
By a strong, free wing, through the rosy morn!
To meet the young sun face to face,
And pierce like a shaft the boundless space: 20

To pass through the bowers of the silver cloud;
To sing in the thunder-halls aloud;

To spread out the wings for a wild, free flight
With the upper-cloud winds — oh, what delight!
Oh, what would I give, like a bird, to go
Right on through the arch of the sunlit bow,
5 And see how the water drops are kissed
Into green and yellow and amethyst!

How pleasant the life of a bird must be,
Wherever it listeth there to flee;
To go, when a joyful fancy calls,
10 Dashing adown 'mong the waterfalls;
Then to wheel about with their mates at play,
Above and below and among the spray,
Hither and thither, with screams as wild
As the laughing mirth of a rosy child!

15 What joy it must be, like a living breeze,
To flutter about 'mid the flowering trees;
Lightly to soar, and to see beneath
The wastes of the blossoming purple heath,
And the yellow furze, like fields of gold,
20 That gladdened some fairy region old!
On the mountain tops, on the billowy sea,
On the leafy stems of the forest tree,
How pleasant the life of a bird must be!

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

AMERICA, 1853–

A Sudden Shower[1]

Barefooted boys scud up the street,
  Or scurry under sheltering sheds;
And schoolgirl faces, pale and sweet,
  Gleam from the shawls about their heads.

Doors bang; and mother-voices call 5
  From alien homes; and rusty gates
Are slammed; and high above it all
  The thunder grim reverberates.

And then abrupt, — the rain, the rain!
  The earth lies gasping; and the eyes 10
Behind the streaming window pane
  Smile at the trouble of the skies.

The highway smokes; sharp echoes ring;
  The cattle bawl and cow bells clank;
And into town comes galloping 15
  The farmer's horse, with steaming flank.

The swallow dips beneath the eaves,
  And flirts his plumes and folds his wings;
And under the catawba leaves
  The caterpillar curls and clings.

5 The bumblebee is pelted down
  The wet stem of the hollyhock;
And sullenly in spattered brown
  The cricket leaps the garden walk.

Within, the baby claps his hands
10 And crows with rapture strange and vague;
Without, beneath the rosebush stands
  A drooping rooster on one leg.

CHARLES KINGSLEY

ENGLAND, 1819–1875

Song of the River

Clear and cool, clear and cool,
By laughing shallow, and dreaming pool;
15 Cool and clear, cool and clear,
By shining shingle, and foaming weir;
Under the crag where the ouzel sings,
And the ivied wall where the church bell rings,

Undefiled, for the undefiled;
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.

Dank and foul, dank and foul,
By the smoky town in its murky cowl;
Foul and dank, foul and dank, 5
By wharf and sewer and slimy bank;
Darker and darker the further I go,
Baser and baser the richer I grow;
Who dare sport with the sin-defiled?
Shrink from me, turn from me, mother and 10
child.

Strong and free, strong and free,
The floodgates are open, away to the sea,
Free and strong, free and strong,
Cleansing my streams as I hurry along
To the golden sands, and the leaping bar, 15
And the taintless tide that awaits me afar,
As I lose myself in the infinite main,
Like a soul that has sinned and is pardoned
again.
Undefiled, for the undefiled;
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child. 20

HELEN HUNT JACKSON

AMERICA, 1831–1885

September

The goldenrod is yellow,
  The corn is turning brown,
The trees in apple orchards
  With fruit are bending down.

5 The gentian's bluest fringes
  Are curling in the sun,
In dusty pods the milkweed
  Its hidden silk has spun.

The sedges flaunt their harvest,
10 In every meadow nook,
Asters by the brookside
  Make asters in the brook.

From dewy lanes at morning
  The grapes' sweet odors rise,
15 At noon the roads all flutter
  With yellow butterflies.

By all these lovely tokens,
  September days are here,
With summer's best of weather,
20 And autumn's best of cheer.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

ENGLAND, 1792–1822

Autumn — A Dirge

The warm sun is failing, the bleak wind is wailing,
The bare boughs are sighing, the pale flowers are dying,
And the year
On the earth her deathbed, in a shroud of leaves dead,
Is lying. 5
Come, Months, away,
From November to May,
In your saddest array —
Follow the bier,
Of the dead, cold year, 10
And like dim shadows watch by her sepulcher.

The chill worm is falling, the night worm is crawling,
The rivers are swelling, the thunder is knelling
For the year;
The blithe swallows are flown, and the lizards 15
each gone

To his dwelling.
Come, Months, come away;
Put on white, black, and gray;
Let your light sisters play;
5 Ye, follow the bier
Of the dead cold year,
And make her grave green with tear on tear.

FELICIA DOROTHEA HEMANS

ENGLAND, 1793–1835

The Better Land

"I hear thee speak of a better land,
Thou callest its children a happy band.
10 O, mother! oh, where is that radiant shore?
Shall we not seek it, and weep no more?
Is it where the flower of the orange blows,
And the fireflies dance through the myrtle boughs?"
"Not there, not there, my child."

15 "Is it where the feathery palm trees rise,
And the date grows ripe under sunny skies?
Or 'midst the green islands of glittering seas,
Where fragrant forests perfume the breeze,

And strange, bright birds on their starry wings
Bear the rich hues of all glorious things?"
"Not there, not there, my child."

"Is it far away, in some region old,
Where the rivers wander o'er sands of gold? 5
Where the burning rays of the ruby shine,
And the diamond lights up the secret mine,
And the pearl gleams forth from the coral strand —
Is it there, sweet mother, that better land?"
"Not there, not there, my child." 10

"Eye hath not seen it, my gentle boy!
Ear hath not heard its deep songs of joy;
Dreams cannot picture a world so fair;
Sorrow and death may not enter there;
Time doth not breathe on its fadeless bloom; 15
Far beyond the clouds and beyond the tomb,
It is there, it is there, my child."

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

AMERICA, 1807–1882

The Old Clock on the Stairs

Somewhat back from the village street
Stands the old-fashioned country seat.
Across its antique portico
Tall poplar trees their shadows throw;
5 And from its station in the hall
An ancient timepiece says to all, —
"Forever — never!
Never — forever!"

Halfway up the stairs it stands,
10 And points and beckons with its hands
From its case of massive oak,
Like a monk, who, under his cloak,
Crosses himself, and sighs, alas!
With sorrowful voice to all who pass, —
15 "Forever — never!
Never — forever!"

By day its voice is low and light;
But in the silent dead of night,
Distinct as a passing footstep's fall,
20 It echoes along the vacant hall,

Along the ceiling, along the floor,
And seems to say at each chamber door, —
"Forever — never!
Never — forever!"

Through days of sorrow and of mirth, 5
Through days of death and days of birth,
Through every swift vicissitude
Of changeful time, unchanged it has stood,
And as if, like God, it all things saw,
It calmly repeats these words of awe, — 10
"Forever — never!
Never — forever!"

In that mansion used to be
Free-hearted Hospitality;
His great fires up the chimney roared, 15
The stranger feasted at his board;
But, like the skeleton at the feast,
That warning timepiece never ceased, —
"Forever — never!
Never — forever!" 20

There groups of merry children played;
There youths and maidens, dreaming, strayed;
O precious hours! O golden prime,
And affluence of love and time!

Even as a miser counts his gold,
These hours the ancient timepiece told, —
"Forever — never!
Never — forever!"

From that chamber, clothed in white,
The bride came forth on her wedding night;
There in that silent room below,
The dead lay in its shroud of snow;
And in the hush that followed the prayer
Was heard the old clock on the stair, —
"Forever — never!
Never — forever!"

All are scatter'd now and fled:
Some are married, some are dead;
And when I ask, with throbs of pain,
"Ah! when shall they all meet again?"
As in the days long since gone by,
That ancient timepiece makes reply, —
"Forever — never!
Never — forever!"

Never here, forever there,
Where all parting, pain, and care,
And death, and time shall disappear, —
Forever there, but never here!

The horologe of Eternity
Sayeth this incessantly, —
"Forever — never!
Never — forever!"

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

ENGLAND, 1770–1850

The Kitten and Falling Leaves

That way look, my Infant, lo! 5
What a pretty baby-show!
See the Kitten on the wall,
Sporting with the leaves that fall,
Withered leaves — one — two — and three —
From the lofty elder tree! 10
Through the calm and frosty air
Of this morning bright and fair,
Eddying round and round they sink
Softly, slowly: one might think,
From the motions that are made, 15
Every little leaf conveyed
Sylph or Faery hither tending, —
To this lower world descending,
Each invisible and mute,
In his wavering parachute. 20

— But the Kitten, how she starts,
Crouches, stretches, paws, and darts!
First at one, and then its fellow,
Just as light and just as yellow;
5 There are many now — now one —
Now they stop and there are none:
What intenseness of desire
In her upward eye of fire!
With a tiger-leap halfway
10 Now she meets the coming prey,
Lets it go as fast, and then
Has it in her power again:
Now she works with three or four,
Like an Indian conjurer;
15 Quick as he in feats of art,
Far beyond in joy of heart.
Were her antics played in the eye
Of a thousand standers-by,
Clapping hands with shout and stare,
20 What would little Tabby care
For the plaudits of the crowd?
Over happy to be proud,
Over wealthy in the treasure
Of her own exceeding pleasure!

SAMUEL WOODWORTH

AMERICA, 1785–1842

The Old Oaken Bucket

How dear to my heart are the scenes of my childhood,
When fond recollection presents them to view!
The orchard, the meadow, the deep-tangled wildwood,
And every loved spot that my infancy knew;—
The widespreading pond, and the mill which stood by it; 5
The bridge, and the rock where the cataract fell;
The cot of my father, the dairy-house nigh it,
And e'en the rude bucket which hung in the well!
The old oaken bucket,
The iron-bound bucket, 10
The moss-covered bucket, which hung in the well!

The moss-covered vessel I hail as a treasure;
For often at noon, when returned from the field,

I found it the source of an exquisite pleasure,
The purest and sweetest that Nature can yield.
How ardent I seized it, with hands that were glowing,
And quick to the white-pebbled bottom it fell;
5 Then soon, with the emblem of truth overflowing,
And dripping with coolness, it rose from the well; —
The old oaken bucket,
The iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket, arose from the well!

10 How sweet from the green mossy brim to receive it,
As, poised on the curb, it inclined to my lips!
Not a full blushing goblet could tempt me to leave it,
Though filled with the nectar that Jupiter sips.
And now, far removed from the loved situation,
15 The tear of regret will intrusively swell,
As fancy reverts to my father's plantation,
And sighs for the bucket which hangs in the well; —
The old oaken bucket,
The iron-bound bucket,
20 The moss-covered bucket, which hangs in the well!

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

AMERICA, 1807–1892

The Barefoot Boy

Blessings on thee, little man,
Barefoot boy, with cheek of tan!
With thy turned-up pantaloons,
And thy merry whistled tunes;
With thy red lip, redder still, 5
Kissed by strawberries on the hill;
With the sunshine on thy face,
Through thy torn brim's jaunty grace,
From my heart I give thee joy,
I was once a barefoot boy. 10

Prince thou art, — the grown-up man
Only is republican,
Let the million-dollared ride,
Barefoot, trudging at his side,
Thou hast more than he can buy, 15
In the reach of ear and eye, —
Outward sunshine, inward joy;
Blessings on thee, barefoot boy.

Oh, for boyhood's painless play,
Sleep that wakes in laughing day, 20

Health that mocks the doctor's rules,
Knowledge never learned of schools,
Of the wild bee's morning chase,
Of the wild flower's time and place,
5 Flight of fowl and habitude
Of the tenants of the wood,
How the tortoise bears his shell,
How the woodchuck digs his cell,
And the groundmole sinks his well,
10 How the robin feeds her young,
How the oriole's nest is hung,
Where the whitest lilies blow,
Where the freshest berries grow,
Where the groundnut trails its vine,
15 Where the wood grape's clusters shine,
Of the black wasp's cunning way, —
Mason of his walls of clay, —
And the architectural plans
Of gray-hornet artisans! —
20 For, eschewing books and tasks,
Nature answers all he asks,
Hand in hand with her he walks,
Face to face with her he talks,
Part and parcel of her joy, —
25 Blessings on thee, barefoot boy.

Oh, for boyhood's time in June,
Crowding years in one brief moon,
When all things I heard or saw,
Me, their master, waited for.
I was rich in flowers and trees, 5
Humming birds and honeybees;
For my sport the squirrel played,
Plied the snouted mole his spade;
For my task the blackberry cone
Purpled over hedge and stone; 10
Laughed the brook for my delight
Through the day and through the night,
Whispering at the garden wall,
Talked with me from fall to fall;
Mine the sand-rimmed pickerel pond, 15
Mine the walnut slopes beyond,
Mine, on bending orchard trees,
Apples of Hesperides!
Still, as my horizon grew,
Larger grew my riches too, 20
All the world I saw or knew
Seemed a complex Chinese toy
Fashioned for a barefoot boy.

Oh, for festal dainties spread,
Like my bowl of milk and bread,— 25

Pewter spoon and bowl of wood,
On the doorstone, gray and rude,
O'er me like a regal tent,
Cloudy-ribbed, the sunset bent,
5 Purple-curtained, fringed with gold,
Looped in many a wind-swung fold,
While for music came the play
Of the pied frog's orchestra,
And, to light the noisy choir,
10 Lit the fly his lamp of fire.
I was monarch, pomp, and joy,
Waited on thee, barefoot boy.

Cheerily, then, my little man,
Live and laugh as boyhood can,
15 Though the flinty slopes be hard,
Stubble-speared the new-mown sward,
Every morn shall lead thee through
Fresh baptisms of the dew,
Every evening from thy feet,
20 Shall the cool wind kiss the heat,
All too soon these feet must hide,
In the prison cells of pride,
Lose the freedom of the sod,
Like a colt's for work be shod,

Made to tread the mills of toil,
Up and down in ceaseless moil,
Happy if their track be found
Never on forbidden ground;
Happy if they sink not in 5
Quick and treacherous sands of sin,
Ah! that thou couldst know thy joy,
Ere it passes, barefoot boy.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

AMERICA, 1807–1882

The Village Blacksmith

Under a spreading chestnut tree
The village smithy stands; 10
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long, 15
His face is like the tan;
His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man. 20

Week in, week out, from morn till night
  You can hear his bellows blow;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
  With measured beat and slow,
5 Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
  When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school
  Look in at the open door;
They love to see the flaming forge,
10 And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
  Like chaff from a threshing floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church,
  And sits among his boys;
15 He hears the parson pray and preach;
  He hears his daughter's voice,
Singing in the village choir,
  And it makes his heart rejoice.

It sounds to him like her mother's voice,
20 Singing in Paradise!
He needs must think of her once more,
  How in the grave she lies;
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes
  A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling, — rejoicing, — sorrowing,
  Onward through life he goes;
Each morning sees some task begin,
  Each evening sees it close;
Something attempted, something done, 5
  Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
  For the lesson thou hast taught!
Thus at the flaming forge of life
  Our fortunes must be wrought; 10
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
  Each burning deed and thought!

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

AMERICA, 1803–1882

The Mountain and the Squirrel

The mountain and the squirrel
Had a quarrel,
And the former called the latter "Little prig;" 15
Bun replied,
"You are doubtless very big,
But all sorts of things and weather
Must be taken in together

To make up a year,
And a sphere,
And I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place:
5 If I'm not so large as you,
You are not so small as I,
And not half so spry,
I'll not deny you make
A very pretty squirrel track.
10 Talents differ, all is well and wisely put.
If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut."

CHARLES KINGSLEY

ENGLAND, 1819–1875

A Farewell

Farewell, dear child, I have no song to give thee,
No lark could pipe to skies so dull and gray;
15 But ere we part one lesson I would leave thee,
For every day.

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever.
Do noble things, not dream them all day long;
And so make life, death, and that vast forever,
20 One grand, sweet song.

EUGENE FIELD

AMERICA, 1850–1895

Norse Lullaby

The sky is dark and the hills are white
As the storm-king speeds from the north to-night;
And this is the song the storm-king sings,
As over the world his cloak he flings:
"Sleep, sleep, little one, sleep;" 5
He rustles his wings and gruffly sings:
"Sleep, little one, sleep."

On yonder mountain-side a vine
Clings at the foot of a mother pine;
The tree bends over the trembling thing, 10
And only the vine can hear her sing:
"Sleep, sleep, little one, sleep—
What shall you fear when I am here?
Sleep, little one, sleep."

The king may sing in his bitter flight, 15
The tree may croon to the vine to-night,
But the little snowflake at my breast
Liketh the song I sing the best—

"Sleep, sleep, little one, sleep;
Weary thou art, a-next my heart,
Sleep, little one, sleep."

ALFRED TENNYSON

ENGLAND, 1809–1892

Sweet and Low

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
5 Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go;
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
10 Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest;
Father will come to thee soon.
Rest, rest on mother's breast;
15 Father will come to thee soon.
Father will come to his babe in the nest;
Silver sails all out of the west,
Under the silver moon;
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep!

THOMAS MOORE

IRELAND, 1779–1852

Morning Hymn

Thou art, O God, the life and light
  Of all this wond'rous world we see;
Its glow by day, its smile by night,
  Are but reflections caught of Thee.

When youthful Spring around us breathes, 5
  Thy spirit warms her fragrant sigh,
And ev'ry flow'r the Summer wreathes
  Is born beneath that kindling eye.

ROBERT SOUTHEY

ENGLAND, 1774–1843

The Inchcape Rock

No stir in the air, no stir in the sea,
The ship was still as she might be, 10
Her sails from heaven received no motion,
Her keel was steady in the ocean.

Without either sign or sound of their shock
The waves flowed over the Inchcape Rock;
So little they rose, so little they fell,
They did not move the Inchcape Bell.

5 The good old Abbot of Aberbrothok
Had placed that bell on the Inchcape Rock;
On a buoy in the storm it floated and swung,
And louder and louder its warning rung.

When the Rock was hid by the tempest's swell,
10 The mariners heard the warning bell;
And then they knew the perilous Rock,
And blessed the Abbot of Aberbrothok.

The sun in heaven was shining gay,
All things were joyful on that day;
15 The sea birds screamed as they wheeled round,
And there was joyance in their sound.

The buoy of the Inchcape Bell was seen
A darker speck on the ocean green;
Sir Ralph the Rover walked his deck,
20 And he fixed his eye on a darker speck.

He felt the cheering power of Spring,
It made him whistle, it made him sing;

His heart was mirthful to excess,
But the Rover's mirth was wickedness.

His eye was on the bell and float;
Quoth he, "My men, put out the boat,
And row me to the Inchcape Rock, 5
And I'll plague the priest of Aberbrothok."

The boat is lowered, the boatmen row,
And to the Inchcape Rock they go;
Sir Ralph bent over from the boat,
And he cut the bell from the Inchcape float. 10

Down sank the bell with a gurgling sound,
The bubbles rose and burst around;
Quoth Sir Ralph, "The next who comes to the
Rock
Will not bless the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

Sir Ralph the Rover sailed away, 15
He scoured the seas for many a day;
And now grown rich with plundered store,
He steers his course for Scotland's shore.

So thick a haze o'erspreads the sky
They cannot see the sun on high; 20

The wind hath blown a gale all day,
At evening it hath died away.

On the deck the Rover takes his stand;
So dark it is they see no land.
5 Quoth Sir Ralph, "It will be lighter soon,
For there is the dawn of the rising moon."

"Canst hear," said one, "the breakers roar?
For methinks we should be near the shore;
Now where we are I cannot tell,
10 But I wish I could hear the Inchcape Bell."

They hear no sound, the swell is strong;
Though the wind hath fallen, they drift along,
Till the vessel strikes with a shivering shock,—
"O, Christ! It is the Inchcape Rock!"

CELIA THAXTER

AMERICA, 1836–1894

The Sandpiper

15 Across the lonely beach we flit,
One little sandpiper and I;
And fast I gather, bit by bit,
The scattered driftwood bleached and dry.

The wild waves reach their hands for it,
  The wild wind raves, the tide runs high,
As up and down the beach we flit, —
  One little sandpiper and I.

Above our heads the sullen clouds 5
  Scud black and swift across the sky;
Like silent ghosts in misty shrouds
  Stand out the white lighthouses high.
Almost as far as eye can reach
  I see the close-reefed vessels fly, 10
As fast we flit along the beach, —
  One little sandpiper and I.

I watch him as he skims along
  Uttering his sweet and mournful cry;
He starts not at my fitful song, 15
  Nor flash of fluttering drapery.
He has no thought of any wrong;
  He scans me with a fearless eye;
Stanch friends are we, well tried and strong,
  The little sandpiper and I. 20

Comrade, where wilt thou be to-night
  When the loosed storm breaks furiously?

My driftwood fire will burn so bright!
To what warm shelter canst thou fly?
I do not fear for thee, though wroth
The tempest rushes through the sky;
5 For are we not God's children both,
Thou, little sandpiper, and I?

CELIA THAXTER

AMERICA, 1836–1894

Nikolina

O tell me, little children, have you seen her—
The tiny maid from Norway, Nikolina?
O, her eyes are blue as cornflow'rs mid the corn,
10 And her cheeks are rosy red as skies of morn!

Nikolina! swift she turns if any call her,
As she stands among the poppies, hardly taller,
Breaking off their scarlet cups for you,
With spikes of slender larkspur burning blue.

15 In her little garden many a flower is growing—
Red, gold, and purple in the soft wind blowing;
But the child that stands amid the blossoms gay
Is sweeter, quainter, brighter e'en than they.

JOHN TOWNSEND TROWBRIDGE

AMERICA, 1827–

Evening at the Farm

Over the hill the farm boy goes;
His shadow lengthens along the land,
A giant staff in giant hand;
In the poplar tree above the spring
The katydid begins to sing; 5
The early dews are falling:
Into the stone heap darts the mink,
The swallows skim the river's brink,
And home to the woodland fly the crows,
When over the hill the farm boy goes, 10
Cheerily calling —
"Co', boss! co', boss! co'! co'! co'!"
Farther, farther over the hill,
Faintly calling, calling still —
"Co', boss! co', boss! co'! co'!" 15

Into the yard the farmer goes,
With grateful heart, at the close of day:
Harness and chain are hung away;

In the wagon shed stand yoke and plow;
The straw's in the stack, the hay in the mow;
The cooling dews are falling:
The friendly sheep his welcome bleat,
5 The pigs come grunting to his feet,
The whinnying mare her master knows,
When into the yard the farmer goes,
His cattle calling—
"Co', boss! co', boss! co'! co'! co'!"
10 While still the cow-boy far away,
Goes seeking those that have gone astray—
"Co', boss! co', boss! co'! co'!"

Now to her task the milkmaid goes;
The cattle come crowding through the gate,
15 Lowing, pushing, little and great;
About the trough, by the farmyard pump,
The frolicsome yearlings frisk and jump,
While the pleasant dews are falling:
The new milch heifer is quick and shy,
20 But the old cow waits with tranquil eye,
And the white stream into the bright pail flows,
When to her task the milkmaid goes,
Soothingly calling—
"So, boss! so, boss! so! so! so!"

The cheerful milkmaid takes her stool,
And sits and milks in the twilight cool,
Saying, "So, so, boss! so! so!"

To supper at last the farmer goes:
The apples are pared, the paper read, 5
The stories are told, then all to bed:
Without, the cricket's ceaseless song
Makes shrill the silence all night long;
The heavy dews are falling:
The housewife's hand has turned the lock; 10
Drowsily ticks the kitchen clock;
The household sinks to deep repose;
But still in sleep the farm boy goes
Singing, calling —
"Co', boss! co', boss! co'! co'! co'!" 15
And oft the milkmaid, in her dreams,
Drums in the pail with the flashing streams,
Murmuring, "So, boss! so!"